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A new subspecies of *Poeoptera lugubris* Bonaparte from Uganda

by STUART KEITH

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The Narrow-tailed Starling, *Poeoptera lugubris* Bonaparte, has previously been considered a lowland forest species, occurring from Sierra Leone eastward to the Congo and just reaching Uganda at Bwamba, a lowland forest at 2,500 feet. Recently, however, the bird has been found in higher forest in other parts of western Uganda. These highland birds differ sufficiently from the lowland birds to warrant subspecific recognition, and accordingly I name them

Poeoptera lugubris webbi, subsp. nov.

Type: Carnegie Museum No. 141,661; adult male; Impenetrable (Kayonza) Forest, Kigezi, Uganda, altitude 5,000 feet; 5th August 1960; Arthur Twomey and John Williams, collectors.

Measurement of type: Wing 98; tail 136 mm.

Description: Larger than what now becomes the nominate race. Wing measurements of nominate *lugubris* in the A.M.N.H. are: 15 males, range 89-96, average 93.13; seven females, range 84-93, average 89.3. Wing measurements of *webbi* are: 13 males, range 94-99, average 97.23; 13 females, range 90-96, average 91.92. The series of *webbi* specimens come from two forests of western Uganda, the Kibale and the Impenetrable forests. Measurements from these two places are almost identical; from the Kibale forest, five males measure: range 95-99, average 97.2; nine females, range 90-96, average 92. From the Impenetrable forest, eight males, range 94-99, average 97.25 four females, range 90-95, average 91.75.

Tail length in this species is so variable as to be useless for taxonomic purposes. For instance, tail length of the A.M.N.H. series of 15 males of nominate *lugubris* has a range of 86-128, with an average of 111.2. A single bird has a tail of 128, the next largest being 119. Apparently the long tail feathers are much subject to wear, and in some specimens some of the tail feathers have actually been broken off. I therefore consider tail measurements of little value and have not included them here.

The second character on which I base my description is a colour difference in the males. The males of *webbi* have a bluish sheen to the purple gloss of the feathers. In good light this stands out quite noticeably. Females of both races are much duller and in both races they vary a good deal as to the amount of sheen, though there is a slight tendency toward bluer sheen in *webbi*. In males there is no such variation in amount of sheen.

As shown by Chapin (1954, p. 135), *Poeoptera lugubris major* Neumann is not a valid race. It was described from the eastern Congo, and birds from this region in the A.M.N.H. collection have wings measuring 90–96. They also show no colour difference from the nominate race.

Distribution: Kibale and Impenetrable Forests, western and south-western Uganda. Specimens were collected for the Los Angeles County Museum from both forests by R. Glen, A. Williams and A. L. Archer, and for the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, from the Impenetrable Forest by Arthur Twomey and John Williams. Altitudinal range of collected specimens from the Impenetrable Forest is 4,200 feet to 5,300 feet. and in addition I saw birds at 3,500 feet in June 1962. The bird is numerous in both places, as the number of collected specimens can testify, and it is curious that it has not been reported before outside of Bwamba, particularly as the Kibale Forest has been well collected. I found the bird common in a strip of forest, an outlier of the Kibale Forest, just below the New Ruwenzori Hotel, near Fort Portal, in July 1963. The birds were feeding in fruiting trees together with two other starlings, *Lamprocolius purpureiceps* and *Lamprocolius splendens*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The bird is named in honour of the late Cecil Webb of Nairobi who guided me on my first visit to these forests in 1961. I should like to thank Arthur Twomey and Kenneth Parkes, of the Carnegie Museum, and Herbert Friedmann, of the Los Angeles County Museum, for the loan of specimens on which this description is based.

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Variation in *Falco dickinsoni* P. L. Sclater, 1864

by P. A. CLANCEY

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Dickinson's Kestrel *Falco dickinsoni* P. L. Sclater. 1864: Chibasa, Shiré R., southern Malawi, is a sombre coloured falcon with a somewhat restricted range in the southern part of Africa. It is also somewhat uncommon and is not particularly well represented in most collections of African birds. It ranges from about the middle and lower reaches of the Limpopo R., in south-eastern Africa, north in the east to Pemba Island, off the East African coast, and central Tanzania, and west through Rhodesia, Malawi, Zambia, and the southern Congo to northern Botswana (mainly Ngamiland), the Caprivi Strip, northern South-West Africa and Angola. Most standard works comment on the proclivity *F. dickinsoni* has for palms, particularly Borassus palms, though this is by no means true of all populations.

During the course of a recent collecting trip to Sul do Save, southern Moçambique (April–June, 1966), I obtained two females of this falcon, which, on being compared with material from the Northern Province, Zambia, in the Durban Museum collection, were found to be much paler and greyer, less brownish, below, and whiter over the head-top, face, nape and hind neck. In order to resolve the nature of the variation detected